

HONORING THE LIFE OF LUKE
LETLOW

(Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois. Madam Speaker, coming from Illinois, it is often a question I get here in this Chamber, why do you have a pin of the State of Louisiana on your lapel?

I have the pin on my lapel because there is a void, a void in this institution because one of our colleagues wasn't able to get sworn in. Luke Letlow would have made a tremendous Member of this institution. And I want to thank my colleague, MIKE JOHNSON, and the entire Louisiana delegation, and what would have been his freshman class, for honoring him tonight in a Special Order.

Like Luke, I was a district staffer for years, trying to make this House be a better place for every single American. I was looking forward to serving with him. Unfortunately, tragedy took his life, and we are without his service.

My heart goes out to his wife, Julia, and their two kids, and the entire State of Louisiana, and this institution, for not having the opportunity to see the true leadership of Congressman Luke Letlow.

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The SPEAKER pro tempore (Ms. BOURDEAUX). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2021, the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. JOHNSON) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. JOHNSON of Louisiana. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the subject of this Special Order.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Louisiana?

There was no objection.

Mr. JOHNSON of Louisiana. Madam Speaker, our Special Order tonight is to honor a dear friend, one who would have been a colleague of ours here, and a great tragedy.

Congressman-elect Luke Joshua Letlow, from Start, Louisiana, passed away from complications due to COVID-19 on December 29, 2020. He had just been elected to Congress December 5, and he was only, as we know, weeks away from taking the oath of office and serving here with us.

He was 41 years old. He was in the prime of his life and, so far as any of us could tell, otherwise the picture of health and energy and excitement and positivity. He was excited to serve with us here. His death came as a terrible shock to all the people of Louisiana and to millions of people around this country.

Luke was known in Louisiana for having a servant's heart. He had a peaceful nature about him. When he talked to a constituent, or a friend, or anyone, he made them feel they were the most important person in the world. He was one of those guys who was a great statesman, and he would have left a big mark here.

I have also been encouraged since his passing to know that my friend was guided by his faith in Christ. A good friend of ours told me shortly after his passing that Luke was drawn even closer to the Lord in his final days. In fact, he called this trusted prayer warrior to share briefly about an experience he had just a few nights before he passed away.

He was in the hospital, and Luke said he felt the certain presence of God and his peace. Luke Letlow knew the truth of Christ and the peace of his salvation, and we all have taken great comfort in that.

Luke leaves behind his devoted wife, Julia, and their two young children, Jeremiah and Jacqueline. He leaves his parents, Johnny and Dianne Letlow; his grandmother, Mary Taylor; his brothers, Paul and Matt, and their families; and a huge network of people who were like family to Luke and loved him as their own.

He was raised in Start, Louisiana, just east of Monroe. For the people who don't know the geography, it is northeast Louisiana. Throughout his entire adult life, it was very clear how deeply he cared about the people of our State and those who live in the Fifth Congressional District, which is a sprawling 24 parishes, the largest by land area in our State.

He worked for Bobby Jindal during Jindal's stint here in the U.S. House, and also later when Bobby was elected Louisiana's Governor.

Luke also worked as chief of staff for his predecessor and our good friend, Dr. Ralph Abraham, who just retired and left the seat open.

Throughout Luke's time in each of those positions, he made it a priority to work every day to benefit those that he served. He wanted to make life better for the people of his home State and, in those efforts, he worked closely with our farmers and the oil and gas industry and countless small businesses to ensure they were given every opportunity to succeed.

Judging from his accomplishments and a remarkable record of public service, there is no doubt at all that he would have made an outstanding Member of Congress.

Many people are aware now that there will be a special election in March, March 20, to fill that seat that he has left open, and we are delighted to tell you that his beloved bride, his widow, Dr. Julia Barnhill Letlow, will be running for that seat, and we expect that she will be taking her place here shortly thereafter.

She is a native of Monroe, a dedicated mother, of course, and an edu-

cation professional who has dedicated her life to promote and advocate for higher education, traditional family values, and our quality of life in Louisiana. We are excited to soon welcome her here to fill the giant void that our dear friend and brother, Luke, has left us.

Madam Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. HIGGINS), another member of our delegation.

Mr. HIGGINS of Louisiana. Madam Speaker, Congressman-elect Luke Letlow was called home far too soon. He was a friend and we were looking forward to working together here in the people's House.

His passing was so sudden and unexpected that it caused many of us—it certainly caused me to reflect upon my life and to be renewed in my determination to serve the people and to become a better man every day, because that is the kind of spirit that Luke delivered to the world.

He was a charming and brilliant man with a beautiful smile, a wonderful spirit, a compassionate man, driven to serve.

I had the opportunity to break bread with Julia, Luke's wife, last week, and I saw in speaking to her that Luke lives in the light in her eye, in her children, and everyone that Luke touched during the course of his life.

So I am prayerful that this child of God's presence will be felt, that Representative-elect Luke Letlow's service will, indeed, be felt within this Chamber, if we can just take a moment to seek that guidance that he clearly pursued and listened to during the course of his life. He brought that to those that he worked with and the citizens that he served. So I thank my colleagues for arranging this Special Order tonight.

Mr. JOHNSON of Louisiana. Madam Speaker, I thank my friend from Louisiana, Mr. HIGGINS, for his remarks. We sat together at the funeral of Luke, and it was a great service. There were so many kind words said about him. And he is remembered to just be the great spirit and the great Louisiana homegrown talent that he was.

Madam Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from Oklahoma (Mrs. BICE), who is also the freshman class president, the class that Luke of course would have been a part of.

Mrs. BICE of Oklahoma. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Louisiana for yielding.

I rise today as the president of the 117th Congress Republican freshman class to express our profound sadness that we all share for the loss of our friend and colleague, Luke Letlow.

Luke was a great American who was committed to serving his country and the people of his home State of Louisiana. Sadly, Luke was taken from us way too early.

I never actually had the chance to meet Luke. He was elected on December 5, which was the last day of the second week of New Member orientation.